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RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0380
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0535
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RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

Please note: There will not be a Tel Aviv Media Reaction report
Tuesday and Wednesday, September 30-October 1, 2008, due to the Rosh

Hashanah (Jewish New Year) holiday. Also: Israel will move to
Winter
(Standard) Time on Sunday, October 5, 2008. Between October 5 and
November 2 the time difference between Israel and EDT will be six
hours. After November 2, it will return to the usual seven-hour
difference.

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

12. U.S.-Israel Relations

----- Key stories in the media: -----

The most important interview that PM Ehud Olmert granted the pre-Jewish New Year Holiday media is the one with Yediot, in which he declared that Israel must withdraw from almost all Palestinian territories and from the Golan. He was quoted as saying that one hill and 100 meters are not what will change

In a front-page article in Maariv Noam Shalit, the father of Gilad Shalit, tells Olmert that the responsibility for Gilad's fate will always be his.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Olmert told the cabinet yesterday that Israeli democracy has been threatened by right-wing extremists,

who lightly wounded left-wing academic Zeev Sternhell last week by setting a pipe bomb outside the door of his Jerusalem apartment.

Ha'aretz reported that while Fatah's security professionals seek conflict with Hamas, the movement's political faction wishes to reconcile with Hamas and redirect the anger at Israel.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that PM Olmert will discuss the issue of Iran's nuclear program with the Russian leaders during his visit to

Moscow next week.

Over the weekend leading media reported that last week EUCOM positioned a radar system in Israel, which Makor Rishon-Hatzofe says

is meant to signal Israel's leaders that now is not the time to embark upon a military operation against Iran. The Jerusalem Post reported that an IDF request to operate the radar has been denied.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the infiltration of a border community or an attack on an IDF outpost are some of the scenarios for which Northern Command is preparing as intelligence assessments

point to the possibility that Hizbullah may take advantage of the holiday season to avenge the assassination of Imad Mughniyah. Leading media reported that Syria has eventually ruled out Israel's

involvement in Saturday's bombing in Damascus. Yesterday Ha'aretz quoted MK Ahmed Tibi (United Arab List - Ta'al) as saying on Saturday that Syria is serious in its intention to conduct negotiations with

Israel. His remarks came after a meeting with Syrian FM Walid Muallem on Thursday in New York.

Yesterday Yediot reported that Tzipi Livni has offered Shaul Mofaz the post of deputy PM and foreign minister. Yesterday Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that Mofaz would prefer the position of interior minister. Ha'aretz quoted a source close to Labor Party Chairman Ehud Barak as saying yesterday that Labor is threatening to push for

elections if Kadima continues to fail to meet its demands in coalition talks.

All media reported that the cabinet recommended on Sunday that Police Commissioner David Cohen be reprimanded for accusing Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann of "arrant irresponsibility" for reportedly accusing the police of effectively ousting Olmert. Associates of Friedmann say he never made the comment to which Cohen objected. They said the statement had been wrongly attributed to Friedmann in the past, but the matter had since been clarified. Cohen apologized to Friedmann

and the other ministers yesterday, sending them letters saying he was sorry if they were hurt by his remarks.

Yesterday major media reported that, in a last-minute bid to pass Iran sanctions legislation before the end of the congressional session, the House of Representatives approved a bill late on Friday

tightening trade restrictions and asset freezes on the Islamic Republic. The Jerusalem Post said that the bill's fate was uncertain.

The media expressed concern about the rise of the far Right in Sunday's legislative elections in Austria.

Ha'aretz and other media reported that the police opened an investigation yesterday into the murder of an 18-year-old Palestinian shepherd whose bullet-riddled body was found last night outside a Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Hamas is planning to challenge a bid by PA President Mahmoud Abbas to extend his term.

Ha'aretz quoted former Shas leader Aryeh Deri, who asked a court this week to allow him to run for Jerusalem mayor, as saying that conditions on the ground suggest that the capital is already divided. "The pledge not to divide Jerusalem is empty talk," the former interior minister told Ha'aretz in a recent interview.

Yediot reported that FBI investigators have arrived in Israel in an attempt to complete the testimony of Morris Talansky in Israel. They will check whether his deposition could hurt him following suspicions against him in the U.S.

Yesterday Ha'aretz reported that yesterday three directors of the Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian environmental organization Friends of the Earth - Middle East have been chosen a Time Magazine's Heroes of the Environment 2008.

Yesterday Ha'aretz reported that three airlines flying to Israel are to shortly begin using the pilot identification system known as Code Positive to prevent terror attacks using airplanes.

Ha'aretz reported that Foreign Ministry Director General Aharon Abramovitch is leaving the political service and that he will quit the ministry in November. Media had predicted that Livni would appoint him to an important post.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Liberal columnist Doron Rosenblum wrote in Ha'aretz: "The new [Jewish] year will be a test not only of Livni's suitability for the job, but also of Israel's suitability for a role in which it has never before been cast: a quasi-normal nation."

Block Quotes:

1. "Enough Talk"

Left-wing columnist Gideon Levy wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (9/28): "If the new [Israeli] government is headed for peace -- and this is extremely doubtful -- it must start with actions, not talks. It is very easy to change the occupation's road map. Just take a few steps like a mass release of prisoners and taking down all internal roadblocks and taking down all internal roadblocks to signal that the government intends to make peace. This would advance the political process more than all the talks, as daring as they may be. If I were a Palestinian leader, I'd tell the new government: You know what our positions are, as we know yours. Let's not start everything over again. If you are sincere, start acting, even before the first photo-op between Livni and Abbas. This is even more apt when it comes to peace with Syria -- we know what the conditions are, there is nothing to talk about, only to decide. Enough talk. It's time to act."

II. "Tzipi and the Expectations"

Liberal columnist Doron Rosenblum wrote in Ha'aretz (9/29): "There is ... a daring innovation in having a woman like Livni standing on the threshold of the Israeli premiership, because her advocacy of moderation, her integrity, her caution, and her femininity constitute a kind of challenge against everything that has been popular, beloved and admired in Israeli leadership. It is possible that this will spark a counter-reaction, an opposition, from both inside and outside. It is possible that in her, too, we will discover facets with which we are not yet familiar. On the other hand, it is possible that a change will take place in the style of leadership with which we are familiar. In any case, the new year will be a test not only of Livni's suitability for the job, but also of Israel's suitability for a role in which it has never before been cast: a quasi-normal nation."

12. U.S.-Israel Relations:

Summary:

Columnist and Jewish World Review's Washington correspondent Douglas

M. Bloomfield wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post:

"To hear McCain tell it, remove the earmarks and you eliminate the deficit and are halfway home to rescuing the economy.... One of the first victims of the McCain policy would be aid to Israel."

Block Quotes:

"Christmas Comes on the Jewish New Year"

Columnist and Jewish World Review's Washington correspondent Douglas

M. Bloomfield wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post

(9/29): "McCain, the Republican nominee, has made zero tolerance a centerpiece of his campaign; Obama has vowed to reduce but not eliminate them. To hear McCain tell it, remove the earmarks and you eliminate the deficit and are halfway home to rescuing the economy.... One of the first victims of the McCain policy would be aid to Israel, an earmark of \$3 billion in annual security assistance, plus millions more in other programs in the defense,

foreign operations, and other parts of the federal budget. From time to time administrations have tried to remove the Israel earmark to pressure or punish Israel. Even a popular president like Ronald Reagan had to back down in the face of strong bipartisan opposition from the Congress."

CUNNINGHAM